

**ABSTRACT**

Disclosed is a method and apparatus for obtaining information from a remote database via a telephone network using an automated interactive system. Such information may include, for example, credit history information, address/telephone number information, and book availability information. The system includes a an automated call handler for receiving calls from the telephone, for receiving a request for information, for accessing the requested information, and for providing the requested information in accordance with the request, an audio controller providing outgoing audio messages from the call handler to the telephone, and a gateway coupled to the call handler and having a searchable database that may be accessed by the call handler. A user calls into the system and interactively with the system enters information via the telephone keypad using plurality of two-character responses. The system analyzes the plurality of two-character responses, converts them into an ASCII database search request, search for the requested information from a database, and provides an audio response to the user.